Fears were raised over flooding

Fears that lodes collapse could cause floods – 1979

EIGHT miles of lodes in the Burwell district could collapse, causing massive flooding, unless £1 million is spent to consolidate them.

Not everybody agrees they should be saved.

Since fen drainage, the peat has shrank leaving the banks 15 to 20 feet high above the surrounding land.

If the trendy conservationist lobby is going for strict historical accuracy, then it should support a project which reduces the banks, not raise them still further.

But they are a vital amenity and one of the few havens of natural beauty in the region.

If enough people feel strongly enough and are prepared to back starry-eyed ideas with cash, then their conservation must be assured.

Ely's It's a Knockout winners

Librarian Phil Marriot

not easy for fire-watching.

In August 1939, work was begun on a scheme of air-raid precautions.

The most important works of art were sent to a private house in Wales and a bank in Cornwell.

Many valuable pieces of pottery and porcelain were stored in a cave which, after a time, was found to be damp.

The rest was packed and stored in the best-protected parts of the museum and measures taken to defend the building against incendiary bombs and the effects of blasts and splinters with a small air raid shelter for visitors constructed in the basement.

There were applications from societies in London to store books and furniture but this seemed a foolish idea since they themselves were sending things away.

They did however store blankets and other Red Cross property in one of the downstairs rooms.

Part of the museum was wanted by the RAF as a training room to install the apparatus by which cadets becoming pilots were given the illusion things were flying at them and of the sky whirling about them when they were sitting firm and motionless.

But while the Courtauld Galleries might have been excellent for the purpose, it was likely that the floors and walls would have suffered very serious damage from the setting up of the machinery necessary and the amount of traffic which would have followed.

The request was never pressed home.

The museum reopened in part in March 1940 with a range of exhibitions that attracted numerous visitors who were grateful for the refreshment of mind they got from their visits.

Keep up to date with the past

- **Read Mike Petty's Cambridgeshire Scrapbook to search for other stories.**
- **Join Fenland History on Facebook to share your photos and information.**
- **Follow James Milner on Twitter to receive regular updates each weekend.**
- **Take a trip down Memory Lane to search for, share and colourise photos.**
- **Subscribe to Mike Petty's YouTube channel to listen to some of this talks.**

Shortly after VE Day, the museum closed for ten days to re-arrange and re-hang all the rooms.

The evacuated works of art had to be received back and the upper galleries put into beautiful order.

The lower floors had to be kept shut because time was needed to unpack and clean the smaller objects but all of the departments will be opened in time.

Ten of the staff were called up including the assistant director.

All-British monoplane being built on Oakington – 1909

ALL Cambridge will soon be taking a deep personal interest in aviation.

In a large barn at Oakington is the slim wooden skeleton of one of the first all-British monoplanes.

The plane, which will soon be completed and ready for trial spins, is the joint work of Messrs A.M. Grose and N.A. Feary, two expert London engineers.

It will be fitted with a 20 horse-power engine and has already been entered for the Daily Mail £1,000 prize for the first circular flight by an all-British aeroplane.

They selected Oakington for the express purpose of dodging inquisitive press but gave a courteous interview to the news representative.

Tyranny distasteful to free citizens – 1897

LET no reader think that this is a pleasant story. It is not, for it is tainted by tyranny distasteful to free citizens.

For the past two years, education at Longstowe has not pursued its onward course quite smoothly for, during that time, the rector and his daughter appear to regard the master of the Church Schools as their sport and play-thing, to be bandied about "from pillar to post" just as suits their autocratic fancy.

Having made a schoolmaster in a Lincolnshire parish fairly uncomfortable, the sire and his daughter came down to Longstowe Rectory in 1895 and at once tried their hand on Mr and Mrs Rowland who, for several years, had been training the young ideas of the parish to the satisfaction of the manager, the parents and the inspectors.

But they have now resigned their position rather than lackey to the newcomer who, with his "I insist", made life anything but one of pleasurable liberty.